

THE FOCALPOINT

FIRST PARISH IN LEXINGTON
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

September 2017—What Does It Mean to be a Community of Welcome?

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Deadline for October issue: Monday, September 25th

Worship Services for September
What Does it Mean to be a Community of Welcome?

September 3, Mandy Beal
"What Connects Us"



Humans are relational beings. Our religious tradition values these connections, as well as our individuality. How might we find a balance between our individuality and our interconnectedness?

Mandy Beal is a graduate of Andover Newton Theological School ('16) and a candidate for Unitarian Universalist Ministry. She is the Youth and Connections Ministry Assistant at First Unitarian Church in Worcester. Prior to that, Mandy completed a ministerial internship at the First Parish in Lincoln.

September 10, Rev. Anne Mason
"Ingathering"



Welcome Home! Join us for our All Ages Ingathering Service as we join together after the summer. Some of us have had time away to rest and reflect, but all of us have been affected by the tumultuous events on the national scene. It will be good to be together, and it will be good to welcome all who seek shelter in our sacred community.

Bring some water to share, whether it be from your vacation or from your own kitchen faucet. Bring your hopes for our work together. Bring your dreams, bring your hurting hearts, and come worship together.

After the service, during Coffee Hour, we will have some fun exploring the new developments throughout our building. What will you discover under the green scaffolding on our steeple !?!

Worship Services for September
What Does it Mean to be a Community of Welcome?

September 17, Rev. Anne Mason
"Being Human is a Guesthouse"



As people of faith we are called to be welcoming – as individuals, as households, as a sacred community. Yet sometimes we are not as welcoming as we want to be. Rumi encourages us to be open to every arrival to our 'guesthouse' – to "be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond."

September 24, Rev. Anne Mason
"Far from Perfect"



As we try to turn towards the good, the true, and the beautiful, we must be aware of all that exists in our world and in ourselves that may be the opposite of what we seek. We have endured wrongs, and we have perpetuated them as well. In this complex world, when is it time to move from anger to forgiveness?



From Your Minister

The beauty of our August weather seems but a taste of the paradise we all seek. From the cold and then sweltering heat of early summer, we have been drifting through some perfectly balanced days of warmth and evenings of coolness. Yet underneath this seeming perfection has been an undercurrent of a national conversation which has filled us with outrage. Let me be clear. There is no place in our country for hate-filled language which incites violence. There is no place here for intolerance or white supremacy. We condemn without hesitation any action which brings about acts of terror such as occurred in Charlottesville. We stand, as we have always stood, on the side of Love.

Our Unitarian Universalist message of love and respect for the diversity of our beautiful mass of humanity has always been our most important core value. In the face of polarized perspectives, let us be a bridge of communication. Let us explore the plight of those who are hurting, from every part of this country. Let us create within ourselves the open ears and open hearts which will help us to understand the true stories of all who are suffering. Let us find, together, the courage to act as one people of faith. For our UU principles call us to act with compassion as we seek truth and meaning. We strive to promote the use of the democratic process as we work towards a global community, because we know that we are all connected through the interdependent web of all existence.

This will be an exciting year to be a part of this community of faith, for we are needed in this world. We will be spending time together visioning who and what we are called to be in this time, in this place. We will be celebrating the strength of 325 years of our existence, looking backwards to know where we came from, and forward to see where we are going.

Come and join us on the journey!

In faith,

Rev. Anne



Ingathering Sunday

Please bring in a small amount of water to share during the Water Communion ceremony as part of the service on Ingathering Sunday, September 10th. After the service, join in a fun scavenger hunt, exploring the new happenings around church from a summer of work.

Potluck Picnic

After the service on Sunday, September 24th, there will be a picnic potluck on the First Parish field. All are welcome to this fun gathering as we begin our church year together! If your last name begins with A through I, please bring a salad or appetizer to share. If your last name begins with J through R, please bring a main dish. If your last name begins with S through Z, please bring a dessert.

Memorial Garden Service

On October 1st after the regular church service, all are invited to a short Memorial Garden service to dedicate new memorial bricks and to honor our loved ones who are no longer present on earth, but who live on in our hearts and memories. Weather permitting, the service will be in the Memorial Garden, which has been maintained over the summer by the Memorial Garden Committee and a group of faithful volunteers.

Great Fall Auction

The Great Fall Auction—an amazingly fun church-wide event and important fundraiser for the church—is scheduled for Friday, November 18th, at the church. Please Save the Date! The evening includes a live auction, silent auction, highly entertaining guest auctioneers, and food and beverages. For more information or if you'd like to volunteer to help with the auction, please contact the Auction Chair, Tom Rich, or email fallauction@fplex.org.

Katie Takes Co-Charge

As part of a dramatic, but largely non-violent, coup, Katie O'Hare Gibson has seized partial control of the First Parish Board for the upcoming year. Where Tom Rich (bless him) served as our sole Chair last year (serving all year without a Vice Chair!), Katie and I will serve as Co-Chairs this year. This move was enthusiastically and unanimously approved by the Board and begrudgingly but gratefully embraced by me.

Katie brings enormous talent, experience, and energy to her new leadership role, assets that will provide a healthy balance to our shared leadership. In some ways, we are very much alike: we are both parents of above-average children (who have grown up in our church), we are both professional educators and administrators, we have both served in many capacities within the church, and we are both very nice (except for me). In other ways, we bring diverse perspectives to our new roles: we are different in age, in gender, in interests and experiences within the congregation, and only one of us is married to Regie O'Hare Gibson. And we like each other.

Together we look forward to an exciting year as your Board Co-Chairs. Please feel free to contact either of us with your hopes, concerns, or suggestions for the year ahead. And say thanks to Katie when you see her.

BOARD

**Lisa Maria Steinberg, Director of Lifespan Religious Education
Adult Programs, Youth, and Children**



The beginning of the church year is a great time to connect, reconnect, learn, and grow through the Lifespan Religious Education program at First Parish.

Adult Programs

We are excited to start a new Thursday night series focusing on Unitarian Universalist history, theology, identity, and values. This series will start on Thursday September 28th at 7:00 with a facilitated discussion for all those gathered on what would be of value in their learning about Unitarian Universalism. As the fall progresses, we will be showing the Unitarian Universalist series “Long Strange Trip”, with post-viewing discussions led by Rev. Anne Mason and Lisa Maria Steinberg.

Interspersed with the viewings of the history series will be a celebration of our history at First Parish. In January, we invite you to reflect on the state of our democracy a year into the Trump Administration when we will discuss the UUA Common Read, *Daring Democracy*, by Frances Moore Lappé and Adam Eichen. Stay tuned for more programming details for Thursday evenings in the late winter and spring.

We are also putting together a Sunday morning series from 9:00-10:15 to engage with current events, TED talks, podcasts, and other emerging ideas that speak to the spiritual paths we walk together. We are looking for facilitators. If you are interested, please contact Lisa Maria Steinberg. Training for facilitators will be provided.

**Lisa Maria Steinberg, Director of Lifespan Religious Education
Adult Programs, Youth, and Children**

We are continuing Chalice Circles, our Small Group Ministry. This is a great way to develop deeper connections with the members and friends of First Parish, and dive deeper into how our monthly themes inform us as a community and support you on your personal spiritual journey. If you are not currently in a Chalice Circle and wish to be, contact Lisa Maria Steinberg.

For information on other Adult Programs, including Meditation Groups, Non-Fiction Book Group, Creative Callings (Fiber Arts Group), and Affinity Groups (Over 80s Group, Unity Group) please contact Lisa Maria Steinberg.

Youth Groups

Senior High Youth Group will continue to meet on Sunday evenings at 7:00-9:00. We are still in the planning stage for the Service Trip (to Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation June 2018), so stay tuned for details on a final info session for all interested youth. Along with Katie Camire, our Youth Coordinator, the chaperones on the trip are Ben Soule and Anne Khudari. A final commitment for those going on the trip will be requested of youth this fall. Youth are also encouraged to attend Sunday morning Worship.

Junior High Youth Group (6th-8th grade) will meet four times during the church year for special activities. On a weekly basis, 6th to 8th graders are encouraged to attend Worship, Chapel and/or OWL.

7th and 8th Grade OWL — Comprehensive Sexuality and Health Program

Do you have a 7th or 8th Grader? Wondering about the Our Whole Lives program? Do you know a 7th or 8th Grader in the community who is not part of First Parish, but the family would like to participate in OWL? Last year was our first year of inviting non-First Parish families to participate in OWL, and it was a success. This year First Parish is offering OWL to 7th and 8th graders and welcoming any outside families to participate. Parent Orientation is on October 3rd at 7:00pm, and OWL sessions start on Sunday evening October 15th from 4:00-6:00pm. If you would like to sign up for OWL, and are new to our community please fill out our Family Enrollment Form found at <http://fplex.org/index.php/lifespan-learning/families/> or contact Lisa Maria Steinberg

Sunday Mornings for Children and Middle School Youth

Most Sundays our Sunday School and Chapel programs meet, but about once a month (usually in celebration of a holiday or other special observance) we have an All Ages Worship Service when our children attend all of the service with their families. September 10th is our Ingathering of Water Communion and is an All Ages service. Sunday School and Chapel start on September 17th. Our Nursery is open for babies and toddlers starting on September 10th. If you are new to our community and have not yet enrolled your baby, toddler, child or youth, please fill out our Family Enrollment Form found at <http://fplex.org/index.php/lifespan-learning/families/>

Soul Matters Sunday School for PreKindergarten through Second Grade

For children in PreKindergarten through 2nd Grade we offer Sunday School programming based on the Soul Matters themes and curriculum. Our new teacher, Annelie Nygren-Mitchell, brings over fifteen years of experience teaching children to her work with us and is excited to work with our young people. This group starts their morning in the worship service and then departs for class usually after the Time for All Ages.

Chapel for Third Grade through Middle School

Children 3rd Grade and up through middle school attend the worship service to experience our rituals, traditions, prayer time, stories, and music. Chapel participants depart the service just prior to the sermon and gather for Chapel for a time of faith development that includes sharing in fellowship and engaging with the theme or topic of the service that day. Chapel is led by our Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Lisa Maria Steinberg.

We look forward to growing with you!





In September, the sanctuary choir will resume rehearsing and singing on Sunday mornings. Below is the September choir schedule. If you would like to try us out, please feel free to start coming to rehearsals or the choir retreat and feel free to contact me if you have any questions about our program. Our choir rehearsals will be fun and full of music from many genres. All are welcome!

I am always interested in learning who plays instruments in the congregation (as well as singing!). I am available by phone, email, or appointment if you would like to share your musical talents in worship and concerts!

Peace and blessings,
Rip Jackson

First Parish Sanctuary Choir Schedule September 2017

Wednesdays, 7:30—9:30pm, September 6th through 27th,
Rehearsal in sanctuary

Saturday, September 9th, 3:00-7:00 PM - Mini Choir Retreat
with potluck supper at church

Sundays, September 10th (Ingathering Sunday) through
24th, 9:30 AM warm up and 10:30 AM service

First Parish Choir Schedule— Advance Dates

Fall Music Sunday

Saturday, November 4, 2017, 2-5 PM rehearsal

Sunday, November 5, 2017, 9 AM run-through

10:30 AM Music Sunday

Celtic Solstice Celebration

Saturday, December 16, 2017, No rehearsal

Sunday, December 17, 2017, 9:30 AM run-through

10:30 AM Celtic Solstice Celebration

Christmas Eve - Sunday, December 24, 2017

6 PM run-through

7 PM Candlelight Service

Easter, Sunday - April 1, 2018

9:15 AM rehearsal

10:30 AM service

Missa Gaia

Sunday, April 8, 2018, 2-5 PM afternoon choral rehearsal

Wednesday, April 11, 2018, 7:30-10 PM rehearsal with
orchestra

Thursday, April 12, 2018, 6:30-10 PM full dress rehearsal

Friday, April 13, 2018, 7:30 PM performance

Saturday, April 14, 2018, 7:30 PM performance

Lexington Choral Festival - Sunday April 29, 2018

Afternoon performance (rehearsal and concert time TBA)

Children's Choir Rehearsals begin September 17



Beginning on Sunday, September 17, the First Parish Children's Choir will meet on Sunday mornings from 11:45 to 12:30 in the Parlor and Sanctuary. They will sing in the morning church services every 6 weeks or so. They will also sing on Christmas Eve, Easter, and in the Missa Gaia performances in mid April 2018. The music for the children will be both beautiful and fun and will include music from Broadway, folk, pop, classical and traditional genres.



Enjoy a good meal? Looking to get acquainted with others in the church, both newcomers and long-time members? Spend an evening with First Parishioners at our popular potluck dinners!

Dinners will begin in October, following signups in September. To sign up, visit the piano during social hour, choose which evenings are possible for you, and indicate whether or not you could host a dinner. After signups are complete, groups of 8-10 people will be formed and begin gathering in October in a group members' home on a weekday or weekend evening once a month for four months. The same people remain in the same group for each dinner. There are also options for family potluck dinners where children have their own dinner together, separate from the adults.

Sign up during coffee hour throughout September. Questions about fall potluck dinners? Please contact Linda Coyne at lindatcoyne2@gmail.com.

**Social Hour Hosts
September through January**

Dear Members and Friends of First Parish Church,
 First Parish invites each of you to participate in hospitality by hosting our Sunday morning social hour one time each year. The lead host brings milk for coffee or tea and coordinates with the team; the other invitees each bring refreshments for 30 to 40: (cut up fruit or veggies, crackers & cheese, or sweets). Full instructions are available on our website fplex.org and are posted in the kitchenette. The table below lists your invitations for this fall and early winter. Please find your name, mark your calendar and save this list for future reference.

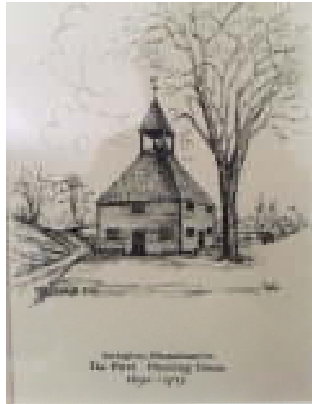


**Social Hour Hosts
September through January**

Date	Lead Host	Invitees
Sep 10:	Pollack, D	Robinson, J, Prusak, L & Prusak, B Roop, M
9/17:	Reuss, D	Reuss, B, Rose, D & Rose, R
9/24:	Beswick, J	Just coffee: parish picnic today
10/1:	Schmitz, J	Ryder, P & Jacoby, T, Soule, B
10/8:	Siegel, E	Scott, B & Walsh, E, Shrum, R
10/15:	Sinnett, J	Stone, B, Sturiale, N & Taibi, G
10/22:	Tan, J	Svenson, E & Jas, E, Tanner, R
10/29:	Barss, V	Tasker, P & Tasker, T, Townsend, D
11/5:	Lee, J	Yansen, L & Yansen, D, Yen, S
11/12:	Adams L	Adams, S & Rich, T, Anderson, M
11/19:	Anderson, C	Kreutzinger, K, Armstrong, D, Afshartous, S
11/26:	Beers-Jones, D	Jones, J, Benson, L, & Smith, P
12/3:	Beutell, S	Beutell, K, Bovet, M, & Bovet, D
12/10:	Brami, L	Bjorklund, J, Bourne, R, Brami, R
12/17:	Breiting A	Brooke, M, Callanan, T, Brinton, M, Cole, J
12/24:	No am service	No am service
12/31:	Chu, L	Chapman, C & Chapman, A, Cannon, D
1/7:	Clark, J	Clark, S, Counts, C & Counts, L
1/14:	D'Andrea, L	Counts-Klebe, M, Cowen, N, & Theriault, M
1/21:	Dahlbom, D	Coyne, B, & Coyne, L, Deily, D
1/28:	Dove, B	Demarest, M, Daly, J, Drew, B

**Get Ready to Celebrate:
First Parish turns 325!**

First Parish (then a Puritan Congregational Church) and the Town of Lexington were born together in 1692, three-hundred-and-twenty-five years ago. Why and how did they come into being? Why did we have to ask Cambridge for our freedom? What kind of community were we in those colonial times?



And, given that beginning and the experiences of all these years, who are we now and where do we want to go from here?

We will celebrate our history and begin envisioning our future this fall, from **November 5 through December 3**, with a wide variety of activities, and we hope that everyone will join us in this remembrance of our past and in planning for the future.

On **Sunday, November 5**, the worship service, led by Rip Jackson with Anne Mason, will be Music Sunday which will celebrate the Spirit in music from many centuries of creative worship.

There will be an exhibit of historical documents in the Parish Hall through this period. On **Thursday, November 9**, there will be a reception for the exhibit from 5-9 p.m. in the Parish Hall, which will feature a Q & A with Lexington historian Sam Doran early in the program, and a lecture by Sam around 7:30. All generations will have the opportunity to learn “the story” of First Parish with Sam’s wide and deep knowledge of our history. There will be

**Get Ready to Celebrate:
First Parish Turns 325!**

refreshments: cider, and snacks provided by congregation members.

Adult education classes, led by Lisa Maria Steinberg and Rev. Anne Mason, will meet on **Thursday evenings October 5, 12, 19, 27, November 2 and November 30**, with the video presentation of Unitarian Universalist history called the “Long Strange Trip,” (created by Bedford UU Ron Cordes), which will cover our evolution from early Christianity through the births of Unitarianism and Universalism, the arrival of these faiths in America, our theological and social development up to merger in 1961, and a final disc covering 1961 to the present. Popcorn will be available. On **Thursday, November 16**, the presentation will be a First Parish history video created by Dan Fenn and the History Committee with LexMedia a few years ago.

During this period, our religious education program for children and youth will connect regularly with “our story” and its meaning for today. And the History Committee will be selling handsome glass sun catchers with a portrait of our church building during the November 5, 12, 19, 26, and December 3 coffee hours, a perfect holiday gift for everyone we know with First Parish connections.

Sunday, December 3 is a Day of Celebration. The morning worship service, led by the staff, will celebrate the congregation in story, reflection, and music. At 12:00 all congregation members and friends, young and old, will be able to enjoy a catered lunch with food inspired by (but not identical to) a seventeenth-century menu.

Get Ready to Celebrate: First Parish Turns 325!

At 2:00, we will gather at the Town Belfry, at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Clarke Street, for bell-ringing and a procession to the church.

At 3:00, we will gather in the sanctuary for a Dramatic Presentation written by First Parish playwright Don Cohen, featuring a trip to the past, a narrator, scenes depicting the founding of the church and town and featuring various Cambridge and Lexington residents, and a return to the present touching briefly on major events in our history, interspersed with music.

The 325th Celebrations Committee looks forward to sharing this celebration with everyone. Developing details will be published through the Focalpoint and the Weekly Update. If you have any suggestions or questions, please contact Helen Cohen or any member of the Committee. If you would like to participate in any event, there will be sign-up sheets (for the adult education courses, the November 9 reception, the dramatic presentation, and publicity). We hope that the events will inform and delight us, and lead us to think about where we want to go from here!

325th Celebrations Committee: The Rev. Anne Mason, Lisa Maria Steinberg, Rip Jackson, Maureen Bovet, Lee Brami, Tish Callanan, Helen Cohen, Don Cohen, Anne Collins, Lew Counts, Polly Erickson, Dan Fenn, Elisabeth Jas, Bill Smith, Ben Soule, Elaine Turano.



Special Plate Donation Program

As we approach the beginning of the church year, it's not too early to start planning for this year's Plate Donation Program. This special collection happens once a month, when money collected during the offertory are donated to local organizations to help support and sustain their programs.

We are looking for suggestions from the congregation for recipients of the 2017-2018 Plate Donation program. Are there organizations you deeply care about or are involved with that you would like to see supported by us? We have only one commitment to donating in November to Black Lives UU. Some we are considering for the coming year are MLK Day, The Children's Room, C4RJ (restorative justice), LexRap, Music Makes Me Happy, and Woburn Council for Social Concern.

Please think about the wider community and how we can educate ourselves about it's needs and awaken others to it's needs. You can email your suggestions to Carolyn Fleiss, coordinator at carolynfleiss@gmail.com.



Our First Parish neighbors at 5 Harrington Road, Carla and Tom Fortmann, have pointed out over the years that the First Parish weathervane has been pointing in the wrong direction. The wind has been playing havoc with the vane, pushing it in all directions, since the steeple was replaced in 2003.

Now, two enterprising and clever parishioners, Bill Pittore and Lew Counts, have spent many hours drilling holes through wrought iron collars at the bottom and middle of the weathervane assembly and adding bolts secured with Loctite and lock nuts. Dimples were also drilled into the stainless steel rod to add even more resistance to the assembly rotating around the rod. Working at the tippy top of the scaffolding—almost heaven—to make the fix, Bill and Lew believe the “N” will now face geographic north for decades to come.

Based on the premise that a picture is worth a thousand words, here’s a photo of the work they did, followed by a picture of our intrepid fixers.



Committee Meetings & Chair Contact Info

There are many ways to connect at First Parish, whether you've been here a long time and are looking for a change or are brand new to the church. Below are the current active committees, the contact information for the chair, and when they meet each month. If you are interested and want to know more, please get in touch!

Building and Grounds (3rd Tuesday)	Dave Pollack	building-grounds@fplex.org
Finance (2nd Tuesday)	Marsha Fox	finance@fplex.org
History (2nd Wednesday)	Elaine Turano	history@fplex.org
Hospitality	Jane Beswick	hospitality@fplex.org
Members and Friends (4th Monday)	Polly Erickson	membership@fplex.org
Memorial Garden	Nancy Earsy Sarah Matthews	garden.bandg@fplex.org
Music (2nd Tuesday)	Toni Tasker & Omar Khudari	musicmin@fplex.org
Personnel	Linda Coyne, contact	personnel@fplex.org hr@fplex.org
Leadership and Service	Elisabeth Jas, chair	leadership@fplex.org nominating@fplex.org
Social Action (3rd Sunday)	Elaine Hylek, chair	SAM@fplex.org
Worship Associates	Ben Soule, Paul Brouillette, Elisabeth Jas, Larry Prusak, Shawna Yen	worshipassociates@fplex.org

Committee Meetings & Chair Contact Info

The First Parish Finance Committee seeks new committee members. No financial experience necessary, just an interest in learning about every aspect of church life through the lens of financial well being. This is an exciting time for First Parish and Finance, as the first and very successful phase of the Capital Campaign wraps up and we support the Board and Reverend Anne in defining the vision and needs of the future. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 7:30 to 9 PM in the Common Room. Contact Marsha Fox at mrsha.fox@gmail.com for more information.

The Members & Friends Committee is responsible for welcoming guests, introducing them to parishioners and church activities, offering new UU workshops, encouraging newcomers to become members of First Parish, and participating in new member recognition ceremonies. We invite members and friends to participate in our committee. Please contact Polly Erickson (polly.erickson@rcn.com) for more information.

Recurring Events

Choir Warm-up, Sundays, at 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service, Sundays, at 10:30 a.m.
Children's Choir Rehearsal, Sundays, at 11:45 a.m.
Social Action, monthly, 3rd Sunday, at 11:45 a.m.
Sr. High Youth Group, Sundays, at 7 p.m.
Members & Friends, monthly, 4th Monday, 7:30 p.m.
Music Committee, monthly, 1st Tuesday, at 3:00 p.m.
Parish Board, monthly, 2nd Tuesday, at 7:00 p.m.
Insight Meditation, Tuesdays, at 7:30 p.m.
Finance Committee, monthly, 1st Tuesday, at 7:30 p.m.
Building & Grounds, 3rd Tuesday, at 7:30 p.m.
History Committee, 2nd Wednesday, at 1:30 p.m.
Choir Rehearsal, Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m.
Creative Callings, 2nd and 4th Thursdays, at 2:00 p.m.
Thursday Meditation, Thursdays, at 4:00 p.m.



Saturday, September 9th

Choir retreat at First Parish, 3:00pm, Sanctuary & Parker Hall

Sunday, September 10th

Ingathering Sunday, 10:30am, Sanctuary

Saturday, September 16th

Lead Donor Thank You Event, 4:00pm, offsite

Sunday, September 17th

Parent Meeting re: Food Pantry, 12:00pm, Robinson Hall

Monday, September 18th

Climate Justice Meeting, 7:30pm, Common Room

Sunday, September 24th

Potluck Picnic Lunch, 12:00pm, First Parish field

Tuesday, September 26th

Staff Retreat offsite—Office Closed

Thursday, September 28th

80+ luncheon, 12:30pm, Parker Hall